

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAGU 00378 252321Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /063 W
-----260018Z 043405 /70

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2133

S E C R E T MANAGUA 0378

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NU, PN
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SOMOZA SUPPORTS PANAMA'S CANAL ZONE CLAIM AND
IMPROVES RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT TORRIJOS

REF: A. MANAGUA 0281; B. PANAMA 0128

1. DURING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA JANUARY 24, HE TOLD ME THAT
HE HAD SENT LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER SUPPORTING PANAMA'S CANAL
ASPIRATIONS ALTHOUGH IT DID NOT SERVE NICARAGUAN INTERESTS. HE
BELIEVED THAT A LARGER PANAMANIAN ROLE IN SETTING OF CANAL TOLLS
WOULD MEAN HIGHER TOLLS FOR NICARAGUA GOODS SHIPPED BETWEEN ATLANTIC
AND PACIFIC COASTS. SOMOZA SUPPORTED PANAMA OUT OF SOLIDARITY ON
EMOTIONAL ISSUE.

2. HE SAID THAT HIS RELATIONS WITH PANAMANIAN PRESIDENT TORRIJOS
HAD IMPROVED AND TORRIJOS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR TREATMENT HE
RECEIVED IN MANAGUA WHILE PARTICIPATING, WITH OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN
COUNTRIES, IN COFFEE RUST DISCUSSIONS ON JANUARY 17 (REFTEL A).
SOMOZA ASSERTED THAT TORRIJOS' POLITICAL POSITION WAS MUCH WEAKER
NOW THAN A YEAR AGO, BOTH WITHIN THE NATIONAL GUARD AND THE COUNTRY
AT LARGE, AND HE BELIEVED THAT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS POSED SERIOUS
THREAT TO HIS CONTINUED ROLE.

3. COMMENT: DESPITE RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN PERSONAL RELATIONS BE-
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TWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS, SOMOZA CONTINUES TO ENTERTAIN RESER-
VATIOS ABOUT TORRIJOS' JUDGMENT AND RELIABILITY. SURPRISING PARTI-
CIPATION OF TORRIJOS IN THE COFFEE RUST MEETING CALLED BY SOMOZA WAS
LIKELY QUID PRO QUO FOR LATTER'S LETTER OF SUPPORT SENT TO PRESIDENT
CARTER.
THEBERGE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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